

United States District Court  
Southern District of Ohio  
Eastern Division

---

The United States of America,

Plaintiff

Affidavit of Thomas Sutherin

vs

Case No: 19-cr-00174-ALM

Michael Sutherin,

Defendant

---

THOMAS SUTHERIN, affirms to be true and states under penalty of perjury as follows:

1. My name is Thomas Sutherin. I am the father of Michael Sutherin, the defendant in the above-referenced case.

2. I have known Michael all of his life. Up until his arrest, Michael lived with me and his mother, Ann Sutherin, at our home in Columbus, Ohio.

3. Michael has been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), a life-long developmental disorder that impacts how those affected see and understand the world, especially in the realms of communication, language, and social understanding. ASD is a neurological disorder (i.e. based in the physical structure of the brain), and is incurable. Michael has exhibited symptoms of ASD for his entire life.

4. On May 1, 2019, my wife and I met FBI Agent David Knight at a Panera Bread near our home. At that meeting, Agent Knight asked if we were aware of any past sexual misconduct involving Michael and any of the underage children in our family. We both replied honestly that we had no knowledge of any such conduct.

5. The following day, May 2, 2019, I met Agent Knight at my home. He told me that Michael had admitted to inappropriate contact with his niece. Agent Knight asked if I was aware of this. I replied that I was not. I said that Michael and his niece had an

antagonistic relationship while living together in our home, and that he had “done things” to her in the way of verbal bickering and teasing.

6. At Michael’s detention hearing on May 9, 2019, I was very surprised to hear the assistant U.S. Attorney say that I had known that such inappropriate contact had occurred, but had not notified anyone, and that I had denied it when first asked. This was apparently based on a report by Agent Knight of our interview, stating that I was “aware Michael had ‘done things’ to [his niece] years ago but had no idea that it was still going on.” That was not an accurate statement. Neither Michael’s mother nor I knew of any inappropriate conduct toward our granddaughter or any other children.

7. Although Michael’s attorney at the time disputed the accuracy of this claim, I want to make clear on my own behalf that SA Knight was seriously mistaken in his interpretation of our conversation, lest this misstatement be considered part of the record on considering the motion for Michael’s release pending sentencing.

8. Having first learned of these concerns at the detention hearing, my wife and I immediately discussed the matter with Michael’s sister Elizabeth, mother of the niece. She was also unaware of any misconduct by Michael.


9. Elizabeth has expressed support for her brother. She wishes for his release. Elizabeth and her daughter have moved out of our home, so that Michael could live at home with us if he were granted pretrial release. My wife, daughter, and I will ensure that Michael has no contact whatsoever with his niece, or with any other children.

10. I do not believe that my son poses a risk of harm to anyone. If he were released, my wife and I would ensure that Michael appears for all subsequent court proceedings.



Thomas Sutherin

Sworn before me this 26 day of March,  
2020



Notary Public

